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Official Records

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New York

President: Mr. Essy ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 41

United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/491 and Add.l)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.27)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I call on the representative of Norway, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.27.

Mr. Biorn Lian (Norway), Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa: In my capacity as Chairman of the Advisory Board, I am honoured to introduce the report (A/49/491 and Add.l) of the Secretary-General on the work of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa (UNETPSA) and the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.27. I have been informed that since the draft resolution was printed some additional countries have indicated they wish to co-sponsor it. These countries are Brazil, Italy, Madagascar, Romania and the Russian Federation. This brings the number of sponsors to 38. We are pleased that this wide range of sponsoring countries from all regional groups reflects the broad support of the international community for the important work of this Programme.

The report before the Assembly covers the period from 1 September 1993 through 31 August 1994. In addition to the report of the work of the UNETPSA Advisory Committee, it provides a wealth of detail on the fields and countries of study as well as on programmes and projects that are co-sponsored with other institutions under the Programme.

The success of the South African elections and the establishment of democratic rule was the crowning achievement, the jewel, in the dramatic chain of events unfolding in southern Africa. The political vacuum must now give way to a dramatic reorganization and genuine integration of the majority into all levels and facets of society. Of all the development strategies and tools at our disposal, human resource development can best make the transformation not only possible, but also successful.

We are pleased to report that, in spite of various obstacles, UNETPSA has, during the period covered by the report, increased not only income, but also the number of students sponsored. The increase in the number of students was made possible by the transfer, upon closure of the Centre against Apartheid, of the Trust Fund for South Africa funds to UNETPSA, as mandated by resolution 48/258 of 23 June 1994. In addition, it is clear that the policy of ensuring the multiplier effect and employment linkage criteria, *vis-à-vis* scholarship awards, is responsible for a number of the

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successes in terms of job placement in the Government, universities, schools and corporations.

We are pleased to note that the fields of study of the scholarship holders are closely geared to the economic and social needs of South Africa, particularly as outlined in the South African Reconstruction and Development Programme. It is also essential to note that there has been an increase in the number of awards and fields of study which traditionally were not available to the vast majority. It is well known that mathematics and sciences were deliberately excluded, and accordingly the medical professions, engineering and all types of advanced science and mathematics courses were inaccessible to the vast majority of South Africans.

Accordingly, we are proud of the training record, which shows that in any one year at least half of the scholarship holders were in degree programmes emphasizing the sciences and mathematics, such as accounting, health and medical professions, engineering and the teaching profession, with specializations in sciences and mathematics and in all types of economics. In the social science fields, lawyers and magistrates, for example, can be expected to play an important role in the process of transforming the status quo by ensuring the democratic administration of justice in South Africa. Capacity- and institution-building, with particular attention on the role of women in development, remains a central focus of the Programme, together with support for education in all types of administration, particularly in respect of educational institutions.

One of the most important features of the Programme is its cost-effectiveness, particularly since 1992, when the Programme started supporting fellowship-holders inside South Africa. Through cost-effective co-sponsorship with local non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and international agencies, UNETPSA has been able to support or co-fund more than twice the number of students this year — 2,600 — with less than half the resources it has traditionally received. In addition, the Advisory Committee has encouraged UNETPSA's catalytic role and, as a result, not only have the numbers increased, but the targeting of institutions and degree programmes has been deliberate in respect of redressing the effects of years of apartheid.

Finally, I would like to commend the Department for Development Support and Management Services for years of backstopping and technical support for the Programme.

Mr. Nhlapo (South Africa): For the past 27 years members of the General Assembly have generously and voluntarily contributed to the Trust Fund enabling the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa (UNETPSA) to extend educational assistance to individuals from Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia. In recent years the Programme has focused exclusively on disadvantaged students from South Africa. It is therefore heart-warming to note that the draft resolution (A/49/L.27) before us is sponsored by such a wide spectrum of Member States, including donors, members of the Advisory Committee and, in particular, our partners in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), in recognition of the SADC objective of promoting the development of human resources.

The Assembly is aware that the Government of National Unity, under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, has set for itself the task of devising a reconstruction and development plan for the new South Africa. South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme is a people-centred Programme intended to reduce poverty and provide opportunity and growth in a stable society where human rights are of paramount concern.

One of the five key components of the Reconstruction and Development Programme is the development of human resources. Enhancing the availability of education and training to all, from pre-school onwards, is the seminal theme of this component.

My Government is thus particularly anxious to see that UNETPSA continues its activities during this period of fundamental socio-economic transformation. Since UNETPSA is an ongoing multilateral Programme and has demonstrated its ability to render direct, cost-effective assistance to individual South Africans, my Government believes that UNETPSA can make a valuable contribution to the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The effective management of funds donated to UNETPSA has ensured an increase in the number of students benefiting from the generosity of donors. This has been in no small measure due to the foresight of recent years manifested in reorienting the focus of UNETPSA programmes from overseas education and training to education and training within South Africa and in focusing on technical training. In fact, my Government believes that UNETPSA has the potential to occupy a unique niche within the spectrum of educational

support envisaged by the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

For these reasons, as the Assembly will recall, an appeal to the international community to continue support for UNETPSA was made by Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo on the historic occasion of the readmission of South Africa to the General Assembly on 23 June 1994.

Only last week, the Advisory Committee on the Tertiary Sector Crisis, formed in September by the Minister of Education, Mr. Sibusiso Bengu, submitted its report in Parliament. The report painted a bleak picture of the snowballing problems in tertiary education, warning, *inter alia*, that

> "the financial sustainability of some tertiary institutions, particularly some historically black universities, has become a critical issue".

Flashpoints for the 1995 academic year listed in the report include the following: problems of access to tertiary institutions being faced by talented students with inadequate or no financial resources; rising unpaid tuition fees — in 1992 unpaid student fees amounted to 89 million rand, and in 1993 the figure increased to 137 million rand; and salaries of lecturers and support staff. The South African Government will respond to this looming crisis. It is, for example, considering a 500-million-rand package as a short-term scheme to rescue some of the universities and *technikons* from financial ruin. President Mandela has signalled that he will back an initial drive to raise a 200-million-rand guarantee fund to mobilize private-sector funding.

This report confirms that the educational needs of a new, non-racial and democratic South Africa must be urgently addressed. It also underlines the UNETPSA's vision, reflected in the draft resolution, of continuing to allocate a higher proportion of resources for strengthening the historically black universities and other tertiary institutions.

We are also pleased to note that the draft resolution encourages close consultations between the Advisory Committee and the South African Ministries responsible for education and the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

Under the able leadership of Norway and Zambia, the Advisory Committee has guided UNETPSA in creating a future, through education and training, for thousands of disadvantaged South Africans. Let us also extend our gratitude to the officials in the United Nations Secretariat who are conscientiously executing their responsibility of administering the Programme.

My Government believes that with continued and, hopefully, increased donor support UNETPSA can play a greater role in addressing South Africa's critical human-resources needs during this transitional period. It would be most unfortunate if this United Nations Programme, one of the most practically supportive of all United Nations programmes, should meet a premature demise at a moment when it is most relevant and when it is functioning at its top efficiency. I assure the Assembly that the international community's continued support for the enhancement of UNETPSA is of inestimable value to the Government of National Unity and the people of South Africa.

Mr. Graf Zu Rantzau (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union, and Austria, Finland and Sweden support the statement.

The European Union welcomes the draft resolution that we have before us on the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa. We have always recognized the valuable assistance rendered by this Programme to the peoples of South Africa and Namibia. Member States of the European Union have therefore contributed substantially to it.

The European Union wishes to recall the particularly important role that the Programme played during the time of apartheid in South Africa. We are aware that this era, which is now behind us, has left a sombre legacy of unfulfilled needs in the field of education and training. During the present, critical period of its development, South Africa's human resource needs are overwhelming: the training of the disadvantaged black majority of South Africans will be crucial for the economic and social development of the country. It is exactly in this field that the Programme is making a valuable contribution.

The European Union hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. At the same time, the European Union wishes to emphasize the important role other United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), can play in Southern Africa. With the establishment of the new South Africa, these institutions are now finally in a position to operate in the country and thus to contribute fully to the development of South Africa in the educational sector.

The European Union is confident that the Advisory Committee on the Programme, when reviewing the future of the Programme, will take this important aspect into proper account.

Mr. Chabala (Zambia): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Norway, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa for his introductory statement. As Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee my delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to pay tribute to him and his delegation for the efficient and dedicated leadership provided to the Programme over the years. We also wish to express Zambia's deep gratitude to the people and the Government of Norway for their generous contribution to the Programme and to the larger cause of peace, democracy and human rights in Southern Africa.

Since its establishment by the General Assembly, the Programme has made a commendable contribution and continues to provide a positive and invaluable input to the development of the countries and peoples under its mandate. It has made a significant and direct contribution to the development of human resources in various fields. It has sponsored thousands of students, many of whom are now occupying positions of leadership and influence in their respective countries, notably Zimbabwe, Namibia and, most recently, South Africa. Its graduates are making a major difference in all areas, including governance, public management, business, law, engineering, the sciences, education and vocational training. They are indeed exerting an enormous impact on the welfare of their communities and touching the lives of ordinary individuals. We are therefore proud of the commendable services it provides. Indeed the United Nations has just cause to congratulate itself.

In recent years, the Programme has rightly focused its valuable services on the needs of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa, as the Secretary-General's report clearly indicates. In particular, we commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee to reorient the programme so that it can best address the priority needs of the new democratic South Africa. In this regard, it is important that the Programme continue to be guided by the new Government's policy on human resource development as reflected in its reconstruction and development programme. We welcome the continued focus of the Programme's activities and substantial resources on capacity-building and strengthening black and other institutions of higher learning. We are also confident that it will continue to make use of its catalytic role in arranging co-sponsorships and tuition waivers for training in sectors previously neglected for the disadvantaged black majority.

We commend the Programme for implementing its training activities in a highly cost-effective manner. This has undoubtedly contributed to its tremendous success. In this respect, we are pleased to note that 93 per cent of the students under the Programme are in South Africa or in other low-cost countries and only seven per cent are placed in high-cost countries, in fields not readily available in South Africa. The programme has thus successfully reflected the recommendation of the 1989 evaluation report. We are also gratified by the slight increase in 1994 contributions and pledges to the Programme from approximately $3.27 million to $3.3 million. This has led to an increase in the number of sponsored students to 2,630, from 2,553 in 1993.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Department for Development Support and Management Services for their efficient administration of the Programme. We also convey our sincere gratitude to all those who have supported and continue to support the Programme through their contributions, scholarships or places in their educational institutions.

My delegation supports the draft resolution before us and would like to commend its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Otuyelu (Nigeria): My delegation would like to express our appreciation to the Chairman of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa and the members of the Advisory Committee for their invaluable contribution and personal commitment to its success.

The changed situation in South Africa has brought new challenges. It is hoped that the resources available for anti-apartheid efforts will be re-directed into the training of personnel and reforming of the old structures which, regrettably, supported the official discrimination, and it is in respect of this that the Programme has a significant role to play.

We are happy to note that the extension of operations into areas from which the majority of people in southern Africa were previously barred — science, mathematics, technology, law and social sciences — where the challenges for a transformed society will be

great. We also welcome the emphasis placed on the training of the citizens of this part of the continent to address those important areas of endeavour. We also note with satisfaction the emphasis placed on a cost-effective approach. We commend the Advisory Committee for this important emphasis. We are also pleased that the optimal use of available resources has strengthened the confidence of donors and supporters of the Programme.

It is my Government's belief that the international community will continue to extend the usual support which has brought about the success we have all celebrated and for which the African region is very grateful. We appeal for the necessary understanding and for continued support and help in improving local capacity-building and manpower training, which will support the young democratic Administration in South Africa and the region as a whole. Most especially during this transition period, when the challenges are enormous, the manpower needed to address the social and economic issues in the region requires the support of the international community.

My Government would like to be associated with this draft resolution, and it is therefore joining in sponsoring it. We hope it will be adopted by consensus.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.27. The following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Ethiopia, France, Guyana and Uganda.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.27?

Draft resolution A/49/L.27 was adopted (resolution 49/17).

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of agenda item 41?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 37

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

(i) Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/177, Corr.1 and Add.1)

(ii) Draft resolution (A/49/L.19)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

(i) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/49/158, A/49/263 and Corr.1, A/49/356, A/49/376, A/49/387 and Corr.1, A/49/388, A/49/396, A/49/397, A/49/431, A/49/456, A/49/466, A/49/470, A/49/516, A/49/562, A/49/581, A/49/683)

(ii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.26, A/49/L.28, A/49/L.30, A/49/L.31, A/49/L.32, A/49/L.34, A/49/L.36)

(c) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

(i) Note by the Secretary-General (A/49/453)

(ii) Report of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.172/9 and Add.1)

(iii) Draft resolutions (A/49/L.21, A/49/L.29)

(d) International cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait: report of the Secretary-General (A/49/207 and Corr.1)

(f) Emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.24/Rev.1)

(g) Special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda: draft resolution (A/49/L.17/Rev.1)

The President (*interpretation from French*): I wish to inform members that the Assembly will consider agenda item 37 (e), "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan", at a later date.

On agenda item 37 (a), the Assembly has before it draft resolution A/49/L.19, entitled "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

Secondly, under sub-item (b), there are six draft resolutions: A/49/L.26, entitled "Assistance to Mozambique"; A/49/L.28, entitled "Economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)"; A/49/L.30, entitled "Financing of the Palestinian Police Force"; A/49/L.31, entitled "Special emergency assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of Burundi"; A/49/L.32, entitled "Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia"; and A/49/L.36, entitled "International cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery".

Thirdly, under sub-item (c), there are two draft resolutions: A/49/L.21, entitled "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction"; and A/49/L.29, "Environmental early warning".

Fourthly, under sub-item (f), there is draft resolution A/49/L.24/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency international assistance for a solution to the problem of refugees, the restoration of total peace, reconstruction and socio-economic development in war-stricken Rwanda".

Fifthly, under sub-item (g), there is draft resolution A/49/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda".

I wish to propose that the list of speakers on this item be closed at 11.15 a.m. today.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to that proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. Butler (Australia), President of the Economic and Social Council: I have the honour to address the Assembly in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council. I do so under this very important item of the Assembly's agenda on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance.

At its 46th plenary meeting, on 27 July this year, the Economic and Social Council gave its attention to the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992 and 48/57 of 14 December 1993, and to the agreed conclusions on the coordination segment of its own substantive session of 1993.

Having considered those documents and agreed conclusions, the Economic and Social Council took a decision which had three parts. The first part welcomed with interest and appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and noted the useful information provided by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in the introductory statement he made before the Council on 13 July 1994.

In its second part, the decision of the Council fully recognized the rich contribution of the report to the numerous aspects leading to the full implementation of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 48/57, but requested that further information be provided on two issues: first, information on the problem of rapid-response coordination, on which the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee were requested as a matter of urgency in paragraphs 11 and 13 of Assembly resolution 48/57, including further information on the humanitarian assistance coordinators at the country level referred to in paragraph 12 of the report of the Secretary-General and their relationship to the system of Resident Coordinators; and, secondly, information on the shortcomings in the functioning of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, the corrective measures required and the desirability of increasing the resources available to the Fund, provided that consultations were duly conducted to that effect, as called for in resolution 48/57.

In its third part — the part which gives reasons for my reporting to the Assembly today — the decision was that, given that the Council was not in a position to take a final decision because of the lack of sufficient information, the interim solution mentioned in paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 48/57 remained temporarily valid until its consideration by the Assembly at its forty-ninth session — that is, this session. It noted that the Assembly would also have to consider the recommendations mentioned in paragraphs 11 and 13 of the resolution, following informal consultations to be conducted on those particular questions by the President of the Council upon receipt of the information requested with respect to the problem of rapid-response

coordination. The Council then invited the President of the Council to submit his conclusions on those informal consultations to the General Assembly.

That is the relevant legislation and background for the issues which the Assembly has before it. We have had a want of further information and, deriving from that, a need for further consultations. That information has now been substantially provided and those consultations, I can today report to the Assembly, have been in progress, conducted by me as President of the Council. But I must also report to the Assembly that substantial consultations have been conducted by Peter Hansen, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and those too have pointed the way towards common solutions and agreements on these outstanding issues.

I can therefore report that progress is being made but solutions and widespread agreement have not yet been found. I do believe that the debate that will now commence, together with the continuation of these processes of consultation, should lead shortly to agreement on these outstanding issues. As that work progresses, it will be handed on to the Permanent Representative of Austria, whom you, Mr. President, have appointed, as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to serve as coordinator of resolutions and decisions under agenda item 37. I know we all have full confidence in his great skill and sensitivity and can feel certain that he will be able to craft relevant decisions and resolutions for ready adoption by consensus by the General Assembly.

I think that it remains for me to take this opportunity to express the deep appreciation of my delegation, and my own deep gratitude as President of the Economic and Social Council — and I know I speak for many — for the outstanding work and dedication that has been shown by our Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon the representative of Argentina, to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.19.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour today to introduce to the General Assembly for its consideration draft resolution A/49/L.19, "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

My delegation is very pleased and greatly honoured to introduce a draft resolution with so many sponsors. I would draw attention to the fact that to the 45 countries that are already listed should be added the names of the Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras, Madagascar, the Philippines and Suriname. This brings the number of sponsors to 53.

The support of so many countries for this proposal, which was originally put forward by the President of Argentina, Mr. Carlos Menem, means that the draft resolution now enjoys the support of all these sponsors: hence it can be considered as a joint endeavour to find solutions to the problems confronting the operational activities of the United Nations in the rehabilitation phase for development in the aftermath of emergency situations.

The preparation of the draft resolution before the Assembly today eloquently attests to the fact that it is possible to work in harmony when considering problems of undoubted importance that bring us together in a common endeavour to solve them. We congratulate all groups and friendly countries for their intelligent and positive cooperation in framing it. I am convinced that that spirit of cooperation will continue to prevail and that in a few days we will have a consensus text. In this connection, the appointment of the Permanent Representative of Austria, Ambassador Sucharipa, to guide the informal consultations seems to us to be an excellent idea, and we should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for having made it.

I should like briefly to explain the concept underlying the "White Helmets" initiative and how it fits in with other resolutions on humanitarian assistance, in particular resolution 46/182 and the Economic and Social Council's consideration that resulted from decision 1993/205, which led to the agreed conclusions of 1993 that now form a part of United Nations decisions in this area.

The "White Helmets" initiative is designed to ease the transition of this concept from the theoretical to the operational. What exactly does this mean? In the principles governing emergency humanitarian assistance a clear distinction is made between the emergency, rehabilitation and development. However, little has so far been accomplished in this specific area of multilateral cooperation. The present proposal is designed to bridge this gap in United Nations operational activities and to mobilize the Organization's potential in the area.

The novelty of the proposal contained in the draft resolution is threefold. First, it involves developing countries in an area from which they have so far been absent in operational terms; secondly, it promotes the participation of the private sector in financing; and, thirdly, it utilizes the system of skilled volunteers with special professional training to provide the quick and adequate assistance required by the Secretary-General in each particular case.

The proposal is consistent with two of the guidelines adopted in 1993. First, rehabilitation and reconstruction components must form part of the very first phase in responding to emergencies and, secondly, specific resources must be allocated to rehabilitation and reconstruction.

In this context the draft resolution highlights the institutional arrangements within the system and utilizes the United Nations potential for activities in the area of humanitarian assistance and in the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, bearing in mind that development activities can be long term. Thus there is a clear division of labour between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which provides coordination, and the United Nations Volunteers with regard to the operational activities in the proposal.

Lastly, in the intergovernmental sphere the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly are to carry out their respective responsibilities, as stipulated in resolution 48/162, in the formulation of policies and the provision of guidance to and coordination of United Nations activities in the field.

This subject will be discussed again in 1995 in both the Economic and Social Council and in this forum when we take up the report we are requesting in the draft resolution. In the meantime, countries will be acquiring specific experience on the basis of the policy we adopt at this session. I am convinced that in 1995 the balance sheet will be a positive one and that countries that are today submitting this initiative will be able to include among their achievements that of having given concrete expression to moving the close link between emergency and rehabilitation for development from the theoretical to the operational.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Ghana, to introduce draft resolutions A//49/L.17/Rev.1 and L.26 and L.32.

Mr. Aggrey (Ghana): It gives me great pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the members of the African Group as the sponsors, draft resolutions A/49/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Special assistance to countries receiving refugees from Rwanda".

As we are all aware; the tragic events in Rwanda following the death of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, led to a massive exodus of Rwandese refugees — millions of them — across the borders to Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. The draft resolution draws attention not only to the plight of the Rwandese refugees in those neighbouring countries but also to that of their Governments and peoples, which were forced by circumstances beyond their control to receive and cater for the refugees, notwithstanding the fact that their own resources are meagre and that they lack the necessary infrastructure to deal with the situation.

While the countries that are affected remain committed to assisting the Rwandese refugees and are grateful for all the assistance that has been provided so far, the grave socio-economic, health and ecological impact of this massive and unexpected presence of refugees on their peoples calls for the support of the entire international community.

The draft resolution therefore urges all States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international financial and development institutions to provide the necessary technical and material assistance with a view to facilitating restoration of the basic services used up or destroyed in the countries receiving Rwandese refugees.

The draft resolution is being submitted in the hope that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

On behalf of the African Group, which Ghana has the honour to serve as Chairman for the month of November, I introduce with pleasure draft resolution A/49/L.26, entitled "Assistance to Mozambique", which is sponsored by the Group.

I am pleased to announce that Brazil has joined the sponsors.

The draft resolution recalls the donors conference held in Rome in 1992 and the follow-up meeting held at Maputo in 1993, whose main objective was to mobilize resources for post-war programming in support of the

resettlement and reintegration of returning refugees, internally displaced persons and demobilized soldiers. It links the need for humanitarian assistance with the need for economic aid for national reconstruction and development. It also welcomes the successful implementation of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique signed in Rome in 1992, which culminated in the recent successful multi-party elections in the country. The draft resolution commends the people and the Government of Mozambique for their diligence and tireless efforts in the search for a lasting peace and stability in their country.

The task for Mozambique now is to repatriate, resettle and reintegrate the numerous refugees who fled their country during its time of trouble and to promote an effective national reconstruction and development strategy to satisfy the aspirations and needs of its people. To this end, the draft resolution calls upon the international community and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue their generous financial, material and technical assistance to Mozambique.

It is the hope of the African Group that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of November, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.32 entitled "Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia".

At successive sessions of the General Assembly since its forty-fifth session the African Group has been one of the sponsors of a draft resolution calling for economic relief and other assistance for the reconstruction of Liberia following the eruption of the civil conflict in December 1989. As in previous years, the draft resolution that I am now introducing has been updated to reflect current developments in that country.

In the preambular paragraphs, the General Assembly recalls its previous resolutions, as well as the recent Security Council resolution 950 (1994) of 21 October 1994, in which the Council, *inter alia*, decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia until 13 January 1995, called on all parties and factions to cease hostilities and agree to a timetable for disarmament and demobilization, and called on Liberians to seek political accommodation and national reconciliation.

The draft resolution commends the Economic Community of West African States for its continued efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Liberian conflict, and it commends the current Chairman of that organization for his positive role in the reactivating of the peace process. It notes that security and logistic problems continue to hamper the delivery of relief assistance, particularly in the interior of the country, and expresses concern about the effects of the protracted conflict on the socio-economic conditions in Liberia.

In the operative part of the draft resolution the General Assembly expresses gratitude to Member States, the international community and governmental and non-governmental organizations for their response to appeals by the Government of Liberia and the Secretary-General and requests that such assistance be continued. It also appeals to the international community and intergovernmental organizations to provide technical, financial and other assistance to programmes identified in the report of the Secretary-General.

The draft resolution calls upon all parties and factions to respect the safety and security of personnel of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It also requests the Secretary-General to continue to coordinate the work of the United Nations system and to mobilize resources for the holding of democratic elections and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country, as well as to make provision for a round-table conference of donors when conditions permit.

As Liberia emerges from the war, the good will and support of the international community should be intensified to help the country to achieve peace, stability, reconstruction and development. I therefore request that this draft resolution be adopted unanimously.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Bulgaria to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.28.

Mr. Pashovski (Bulgaria): In addressing agenda item 37, my delegation would like to focus particularly on the issue of economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

First of all, allow me to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the steps he has taken to address this important and urgent issue appropriately. The report (A/49/356), prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 48/210, in our view offers a proper analysis of the seriousness of

the problem and contains useful suggestions and proposals that could be taken as a sound basis for further action.

It has already been widely recognized that the application of the comprehensive set of trade and economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has imposed an extremely heavy burden on neighbouring and other affected States. The combination of a number of factors has placed these countries in an extraordinarily difficult situation. The most important of these factors are the severance of the bilateral economic ties with the former Yugoslavia, the disruption of the traditional transport and communications links with the rest of the continent and the precarious economic situation of most of the affected States, which are undergoing a major political, economic and social transition.

An additional burden is imposed by the direct financial expenses incurred by these States for maintaining an elaborate administrative system of monitoring and control over the strict implementation of the sanctions.

The impact of those factors has already produced grave economic and social consequences, which jeopardize political and social stability.

In the case of Bulgaria, the sanctions regime has caused enormous losses to the national economy by disrupting our direct transport and communications links with Central and Western European countries, both by road and on the Danube, thus affecting the competitiveness of Bulgarian exports and increasing import costs.

Prior to the imposition of the sanctions, 65 per cent of all Bulgaria's external trade with Central and Western Europe transited through Yugoslavia. In addition, the disruption of the transport and communications links is occurring in a period when the redirection of Bulgarian exports towards the European Union and European Free Trade Area countries is well under way. The impact on the country's balance of payments as a result of this disruption considerably undermines the efforts aimed at the structural adjustment of the national economy. This is a trade-distorting factor, and therefore the negative impact of the sanctions on the development of the market and on the newly emerging private sector is jeopardizing the country's overall economic situation.

As has already been pointed out in a number of cases, Bulgaria's total losses as a result of the sanctions for the period July 1992 to December 1993 alone amounted to $3.616 billion. According to estimates of the International Monetary Fund, the negative impact of the sanctions on the country's balance of payments for the same period equalled $1.115 billion. Forecasts for the year 1994 estimate that this adverse effect will be roughly the same. As can be seen from the report of the Secretary-General, the other affected countries have suffered significant losses as well.

Given the seriousness of the problem, my country has undertaken all necessary procedures to request assistance, and has provided the Security Council with the relevant documentation on the losses inflicted.

At the initiative of Bulgaria and a number of other interested States, the General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, adopted resolution 48/210, aimed at mobilizing international economic assistance for the States affected by the sanctions. In that resolution, the Secretary-General was mandated to monitor this process and to report to the Security Council, as well as to the General Assembly, on action taken to alleviate the difficulties of these States.

I take this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to all Member States and the relevant organs, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions, for the consideration and assistance provided in response to the appeal for support for the affected States, including balance-of-payments and structural-adjustment support. We commend the efforts deployed by the European Union and the G-24 in this regard, especially in the field of infrastructure and communications projects. Detailed proposals for short-, medium- and long-term projects put forward by the interested States, including Bulgaria, were considered by the ad hoc meeting in Vienna of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the G-24 Transport Group meeting for the Balkans earlier this year. The realization of these projects, which will speed up work on the Pan-European transport network, depends to a large extent on the fulfilment of the partners' financial commitments.

At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that the financial assistance received so far has been mostly in the form of short-term, non-concessional loans at market terms. This has assisted States to cope only partially with the immediate negative impact of the sanctions. The medium-term consequences, in our view, have not yet been adequately addressed.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/49/356) reveals that most of the States and the elements of the United Nations system helping the affected States contemplate intensifying their current assistance activities and cooperation programmes. However, the absence of a special procedure to address directly the adverse spill-over effects of the sanctions on the affected States has to a large extent tempered the efforts being made to find an adequate approach for addressing the problem effectively.

The conclusion in the report that there is a lack of viable internationally recognized methodology for the evaluation of the losses inflicted must also be taken into consideration. Despite the lack of such a methodology, the overall estimates show that the total adverse impact of the sanctions is such that a concerted and multifaceted response from the international community is required.

The absence of clearly defined financial instruments for the implementation of Article 50 of the United Nations Charter in general, and in the case of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in particular, is also stressed in the report of the Secretary-General. This fact makes it difficult to disentangle the assistance channelled under resolution 48/210 from ongoing assistance programmes and co-operation activities.

In the light view of those considerations, my delegation shares the conclusion reiterated in the report of the Secretary-General that

> "appeals to deal with the economic impact of sanctions on non-target States have so far depended on the political will of countries in a position to provide assistance or on the capacity of financial institutions to respond". *(A/49/356, para. 80).*

The Republic of Bulgaria is fully aware that the elaboration of a comprehensive mechanism for the application of Article 50 of the United Nations Charter is a time-consuming and complex political endeavour. Work in this field should continue in the future. At the same time, the international community should take advantage of the existing opportunities to assist on a case-by-case basis third States affected by sanctions.

Guided by such an approach, my delegation is of the view that the following suggestions could be considered as possible steps to help the countries affected:

First, granting more favourable access to the markets of the industrialized countries for the goods and services of the affected States. The ratification process of the Association agreement with the European Union should be speeded up.

Secondly, an increase in direct foreign investment and freer access to credit sources.

Thirdly, technical and financial support for infrastructure projects for transport and communications corridors, mainly the East-West and South-North corridors.

Fourthly, involvement of companies of the affected States in humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), financed by international organizations and donor countries.

Fifthly, facilitating procedures for transshipments through the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), both by road and on the Danube.

Sixthly, improvement of the procedures of the Sanctions Committee in issuing authorizations for the export of goods from the affected States for general humanitarian purposes on a priority basis and improved effectiveness of the work of the Committee as a whole. Increased openness and transparency in its decision-making process should contribute to this goal.

Finally, without wishing to undermine the efforts made so far to assist the affected States to cope with their special problems, I should like to reiterate that, bearing in mind the magnitude of the total adverse impact of the sanctions, the response is still far from being adequate. We are confident that, in compliance with Article 49 of the Charter of the United Nations, Member States will join in affording mutual assistance in carrying out the measures decided upon by the Security Council.

Against that background, I have the honour to present the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.28, entitled "Economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)".

The draft resolution is co-sponsored by the following Member States: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg,

Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and my own country, Bulgaria, Argentina and Denmark having joined the original list of co-sponsors.

The main thrust of the draft resolution is to renew the appeal for support by the international community and by the relevant organs, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions, for the affected States, and to continue the mandate of the Secretary-General to monitor and provide the necessary impetus to the overall implementation of the process.

We are hopeful that the draft resolution will receive unanimous support by all Member States and will be adopted by consensus.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on the representative of Croatia to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.36.

Mr. Nobilo (Croatia): At the outset I should like to note the great importance of United Nations humanitarian aid and disaster-relief assistance programmes throughout the world. The volume, value and scope of the programmes have significantly increased in the last decade. The present debate should contribute positively to the many calls for streamlining and rationalizing the numerous programmes, agencies and initiatives that have appeared in the last decade. As humanitarian and disaster-relief programmes are emerging as one of the major policy instruments for maintaining peace and stability in high-risk areas around the world, the debate on this issue in the General Assembly becomes even more important.

The new aspects of humanitarian and disaster-relief programmes in conflict areas around the world require new ideas. The framework and principles established years ago to meet the short-term consequences of natural disasters and human transgressions are now being called into question by new realities, with short-term imbalances in the economic and social welfare of large groups of people becoming long-term imbalances. The special economic assistance programmes, which in the past formed an irregular bridge between short-term emergency relief programmes and longer-term development programmes, may now become a major aspect of international assistance policy.

My delegation is of the view that the special economic programmes should play a more significant role in dealing with the new humanitarian and social realities around the world. The special economic programmes may need to become substitutes for certain emergency programmes that become extended over time. Similarly, other emergency programmes may need to be transformed into special economic programmes in regions where the level of development is high enough — where sustenance needs can be met through new local activities and development.

Every humanitarian programme has its own specific elements; no two efforts are alike. In addition to the obvious specific aspects of humanitarian situations, such as sources, time and the number of those affected, the level of development of a particular area should play a major role in designing an appropriate assistance programme for a country. Because of this unique aspect of all humanitarian situations, we believe that humanitarian programmes should be need-based. This approach requires new ways of assigning and distributing available relief assistance resources.

The humanitarian situation in my country provides a good example of a need-based programme being a must. Croatia has been affected by war for three years now. It is also a country in transition, from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. It is a middle-level developed country with a strong natural and human resource base. Croatia still needs traditional humanitarian assistance, because it cares for a large number of displaced persons and refugees and bears the serious consequences of war. However, its resource base would allow it to take care of those traditional humanitarian needs itself soon if some of the emergency resources were transformed into development programmes and if new development programmes were instituted to rebuild Croatia's war-damaged economy.

The present humanitarian assistance to Croatia, based on traditional emergency programmes, is in many ways, unfortunately, promoting and maintaining the dangerous status quo. It perpetuates a dependence on continuous deliveries of basic aid throughout Croatia. Most worrisome, however, is the fact that the present humanitarian assistance programme is supporting the de facto occupation of one quarter of Croatia's territory.

The net effect of international relief operations in the occupied territories of Croatia is slowly but surely to strengthen the Serbian paramilitary forces there. The

international community may be mistaken when it talks about humanitarian aid to these territories. Almost everything the international community sends to the occupied territories of Croatia either goes directly to the remnants of the Yugoslav Army and their proxies or substitutes for goods they would take from civilians anyway.

With a need-based humanitarian assistance programme, the international community would be able to help to overcome these serious problems in Croatia. In regard to the occupied territories, programmes could be developed that would begin the Security-Council-mandated economic reintegration process of these territories. Basic humanitarian aid could be distributed through Croatian non-governmental or governmental agencies — or distribution centres outside the occupied territories in Croatia.

Programmes for the distribution of fuel, which, as a humanitarian item, is steadily flowing and is seriously misused for military purposes in the occupied territories, could also be carried out through distribution centres outside these territories in Croatia.

Joint development and management programmes could be established in the occupied territories. As a confidence-building measure, creating new economic opportunities and jobs in Croatia would promote interaction and openness, leading to possible economic cooperation, and would contribute to the process of the peaceful reintegration of Croatian citizens now living in these territories.

I should also like on this occasion to comment on the report of the Secretary-General, document A/49/683, in regard to resolution 48/204 with the same title as the present agenda item. The report falls short of our expectations. The Secretary-General reports that resolution 48/204 saw limited implementation.

The implementation of resolution 48/204 was limited mostly to regular activities of the United Nations humanitarian agencies. We are, nevertheless, very grateful for those efforts. Croatia is also grateful for the efforts made under the Revised Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the former Yugoslavia, which is a special programme. However, much more could have been done in this area, that is, in the area of special economic programmes. Further, our relations and cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, for instance, have been very productive, but again, they have been limited by regular indicative planning figure programmes.

The Secretary-General states in paragraph 5 of the report that:

> "The full start of reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in many areas has been hampered by the lack of a comprehensive political solution to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and, in particular, the situation in the United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia." *(A/49/683)*

Similarly, in paragraph 12 he concludes:

> "It is clear, however, that the full implementation of rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes is closely linked to a successful conclusion of current efforts aimed at finding a comprehensive political settlement." *(ibid.)*

From a practical standpoint, my delegation rejects the conclusion that reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes must wait. Croatia has pursued an immediate programme for reconstruction and development in order to prevent a situation where it would be forced to regain its territories by force. It is the view of my Government that the spillover from rising economic activity would positively affect the situation in the occupied territories and lead to a peaceful reintegration of these territories.

My Government has consistently pursued a policy based on diplomatic initiative and peaceful reintegration of its occupied territories with the assistance of the international community. We believe that this policy is consistent with the interests of the international community. As my Government considers economic development and the reconstruction of Croatia's war-torn economy the most significant aspect of this policy and an important aspect of the entire humanitarian programme for Croatia, we come before the Assembly to ask for its support.

I should now like to introduce the draft resolution, document A/49/L.36, entitled "International cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery", which has been distributed today. The draft resolution is sponsored by: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Israel, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and the United States of America. The draft resolution calls for timely and need-based action.

It requests the Secretary-General to appoint, within existing resources, a fact-finding expert mission for Croatia to assess the extent of war damage and its consequences for its infrastructure, resources, environment and individuals, and to consider the needs in order to assist the Government of the Republic of Croatia in preparing a programme for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of Croatia within its entire territory, and to introduce, if appropriate, an international appeal for its funding. We hope that the Assembly will support the draft resolution by consensus.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the representative of Norway to introduce, on behalf of the Nordic countries, draft resolution A/49/L.30.

Mr. Biorn Lian (Norway): In my statement this morning I shall first, in my national capacity, under agenda item 37 (b) introduce draft resolution A/49/L.30, entitled "Financing of the Palestinian Police Force", after which I shall proceed under agenda item 37(b) to make a statement on behalf of the five Nordic countries on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance.

Coming then to the first part of my statement, I have the pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.30 on "Financing of the Palestinian Police Force" on behalf of the following sponsors: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Norway. After the printed version was circulated Egypt joined the sponsors.

The objective of the draft resolution is to give the Secretary-General the necessary mandate to designate a United Nations agency to act as a multilateral channel for the disbursement of salaries and start-up costs for the Palestinian Police Force. This is a technical draft resolution adhering strictly to agreements reached between the parties.

The Palestinian Police Force was established pursuant to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and the Cairo Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area. Following the donors' Conference to Support Middle East Peace, held in Washington on 1 October 1993, an Ad Hoc Liaison Committee was established by the Multilateral Steering Committee, under the Chairmanship of Norway, to effectively coordinate external assistance, including the financing of a Palestinian Police Force. These facts are reflected in the preambular part of the draft resolution.

As reflected in the Oslo Declaration of 13 September this year signed by the parties and Norway, it was decided that the emergency financial needs, including existing arrears of the Palestinian Police should be financed by the donor community for a period ending not later than the end of March 1995.

In order to channel voluntary funds for the disbursement of salaries and start-up costs, discussion were held at the beginning of this session of the General Assembly with, among others, the Secretary-General, with a view to having the United Nations establish the necessary mechanism. In the interim, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency has generously agreed to act as a provisional emergency channel for funds from international donors to the Palestinian Police Force. This provisional measure will, however, soon come to an end, and I therefore express the hope that the General Assembly will adopt this draft resolution by consensus and give the Secretary-General the mandate to designate a United Nations agency for this purpose as soon as possible.

Allow me, in concluding this first part of my intervention, to point to operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, where all Member States are encouraged to give voluntary contributions for this purpose through the designated United Nations agency. Given the extremely serious situation in the area and the very clear need for international assistance, I strongly hope this paragraph is given all due consideration.

I shall now proceed to the second part of my intervention, in which I have the pleasure to make a statement on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway — on the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief.

During this past year the United Nations has been involved in a number of large and complex disasters, such as those in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia, the former Yugoslavia, Haiti and the Caucasus, just to mention some of the most critical ones. In the view of the Nordic countries, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has met these challenges in a constructive manner, taking into account the difficult circumstances. Access to resources is, however, a prerequisite for a prompt response to emergencies. I therefore strongly stress at the outset the necessity of providing the

Department of Humanitarian Affairs, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, with adequate staff and administrative resources from the regular budget of the United Nations.

Whereas emergency needs have increased manifold in recent years, it is still the same traditional donors that are contributing the major share of the funding. The Nordic countries believe that the time has now come to increase the donor base and also that a greater number of countries are in a position to provide resources to the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations.

Resolution 46/182, adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, provided the United Nations with a framework for the international community's coordinated response to complex emergencies and natural disasters. General Assembly resolution 48/57, adopted last year, underlined the need for coordination in the United Nations system and requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator to further improve coordination and management within the system. In addition to fulfilling the task of being the United Nations focal point in emergency situations, the Emergency Relief Coordinator has an important role in ensuring that the humanitarian dimension, particularly the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality of relief assistance, is taken into account in the overall United Nations planning of response to emergencies. The Nordic countries call upon all relevant actors to fully support the Emergency Relief Coordinator in this regard. We support the ongoing efforts to find concrete ways of enhancing the cooperation and integration of planning between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs.

With reference to the recommendations contained in the Secretary General's report in document A/49/177/Add.1, the Nordic countries would in particular like to stress the following five points.

First, the primary mechanism for coordination of policy issues related to humanitarian assistance and for formulating a coherent and timely response to major and complex emergencies is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its Working Group. We feel the Working Group should be given the opportunity both to make decisions on operational matters in emergencies and to explore the possibility of delegating authority to the field as appropriate. Furthermore, we would like to recall that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should review and decide on arrangements to effectively address gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance, including such issues as internally displaced persons and demobilization of ex-combatants. We would also like to underline the importance of properly addressing not only immediate humanitarian needs but also the continuum from prevention to longer-term rehabilitation and development.

Secondly, the Nordic countries urge the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to further strengthen the process of consolidated appeals. All concerned operational and humanitarian organizations and agencies must cooperate and participate fully in the preparation of the consolidated appeals. Based on accurate assessment of needs and programme projection, the appeals should be promptly launched and should give specific priorities. This should in turn facilitate quick responses by the international community.

Thirdly, the Resident Coordinator normally coordinates the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system at the country level. The best possible coordination at the field level is one of the keys to overall coordination of humanitarian assistance. As mentioned in the Emergency Relief Coordinator's report to the Economic and Social Council this summer, field coordination requires qualified personnel to provide leadership on a full-time basis. The Nordic countries welcome the agreement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the designation/appointment of Humanitarian Coordinators in complex emergencies. This is an important step in ensuring that coordination structures in the field are as clear as possible. That agreement must now be followed up. It is our sincere hope that humanitarian coordinators for complex emergencies can, in the future, be appointed without delay and that the right persons will be chosen for the job.

Fourthly, the Economic and Social Council also requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator to provide further information on shortcomings in the functioning of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). In the Secretary-General's report the Inter-Agency Standing Committee addresses a number of issues, such as disbursement of funds, repayment of advances, the level of resources and the CERF's complementarity with emergency funds of operational agencies. The Committee also puts forward several recommendations concerning the use of the fund. The Nordic countries would like to emphasize the importance of finding a solution that would make it possible to improve the accessibility of funds from CERF in an emergency situation. On this point let

me also add that it is important to expand the donor base to include non-traditional donors.

Fifthly, and lastly, the Secretary-General's report deals very comprehensively with issues related to the United Nations capability to respond effectively and efficiently to emergencies. The Nordic countries would like to stress the need for emergency preparedness at the national level. At this session of the General Assembly informal consultations on a draft resolution dealing with this issue have already taken place.

It is our view that all countries should aim at establishing emergency preparedness systems covering personnel and equipment that could be deployed to disaster areas on short notice. We recommend that such national systems be designed in close cooperation with the United Nations. We feel that the United Nations could indeed utilize these arrangements as vital elements in both natural disasters and complex emergencies.

The Nordic countries stress their support for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and welcome the outcome of the World Conference. We endorse the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action which should be fully implemented and followed up. Natural disaster reduction and mitigation must now become an integral part of the United Nations development efforts and should be dealt with in the Country Strategy Notes of disaster-prone countries.

We need to continue to address gaps and imbalances in the capacity of the United Nations system in emergencies. This has implications for several of the United Nations agencies that report to the Economic and Social Council. In our view, the 1995 session of the Economic and Social Council provides a good opportunity for reviewing these issues based on a report from members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

Recent situations have taught us that, in order to gain access to populations in need of assistance in complex emergencies, relief work often has to be undertaken in increasingly dangerous environments. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that the security of relief personnel is appropriately secured. The Nordic countries support the measures taken by the United Nations with the aim of securing the safety of relief personnel to the greatest extent possible, and we urge that this work be continued and strengthened.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I wish to inform members that consultations on the draft resolutions submitted under item 37 and its sub-items will now be coordinated by Ambassador Sucharipa of Austria.

As a first step, it would be useful and necessary to review the draft resolutions with a view to identifying those that may need further negotiations and those which do not.

In this connection, I wish to remind members that, as announced in the Journal, the first meeting of the informal consultations by the Coordinator will be held on Monday, 28 November, at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 8.

All concerned delegations are urged to attend the informal consultations.

I now call on the representative of Algeria who, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, will make a statement during which he will introduce draft resolution A/49/L.31.

Mr. Belhimeur (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): Before speaking on behalf of the members of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 37 entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", I would like on behalf of those same members to introduce the draft resolution in A/49/L.31 entitled "Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions", concerning urgent economic assistance to Burundi.

Members will recall that on 25 October 1994 the General Assembly adopted a resolution encouraging the people of Burundi to continue their reconciliation efforts through recently established consensus-building institutions. Today the Assembly is called upon to send a message of hope to those same people, the hope of seeing economic recovery and reconstruction with the assistance of Member States, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The delegations on whose behalf I have the honour to speak are in no doubt that the draft resolution before the General Assembly will receive the full support needed through a consensus adoption which will be a testimony of solidarity and encouragement to one of the Member States that is trying to restore production and rebuild its infrastructure.

After having introduced the draft resolution on Burundi, I would like now to speak on agenda item 37. It is an honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the report he has put before us for consideration.

The United Nations has, in various ways, been involved in the search for solutions to a series of crises which have marked international life in the past few years. In a rapidly changing world, Member States have felt the urgent need to develop new instruments to meet these crises and to attack the structural causes behind them. By adopting resolution 46/182, our organization gained an instrument which provides it with an operational framework for coordinated international action with regard to emergency humanitarian assistance and natural disasters. The draft resolution is also a point of reference which emphasizes, on the one hand, the importance of the guiding principles behind that kind of action, namely impartiality and neutrality, and, on the other, the need to put humanitarian assistance in a development context in order to break the cycle of dependence of populations receiving such assistance.

While at the institutional level the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the creation of the post of Emergency Relief Coordinator have created conditions for the effective implementation of United Nations action in the humanitarian area, on the other hand, given the growing number of emergency situations, the problem of financial resources remains and calls for additional efforts on the part of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs if it is to live up to the responsibilities it has been given. The situation of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) is of concern in this respect. Since it was established in May 1992, the Fund has shown its usefulness. Now the level of its resources endangers even its very existence. Emergency action must be undertaken to increase its financial basis through an appeal for additional contributions from donor countries and also to ensure the regular repayment by the debtor organizations.

Moreover, the Group of 77 and China would like to recall the reservations they have already expressed in the past with regard to the appointment of humanitarian coordinators. We feel that serious thought and an exhaustive study of this matter are necessary and that such a process in any event must be carried out in keeping with the spirit and the letter of the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Arzoumanian (Armenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Since the dawn of time mankind has faced natural disasters, which have brought human tragedy and incalculable material losses. Despite the march of time and technological progress, these phenomena continue to be a part of life. Worse still, rather than waning, they have become more common throughout the world, with ever more devastating human, economic and environmental consequences.

By its resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly declared the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, reflecting growing awareness of the need for joint international action, if not to eliminate the threat to mankind posed by natural disasters, then at least to mitigate their effects through a framework of action for disaster prevention or risk management.

We are pleased to note that there has been notable progress since the launching of the Framework of Action for the Decade. At the national level, 135 national centres or liaison centres have been established; they have begun their field activities, with more or less satisfactory results, especially with respect to alerting the public and the authorities to the danger of natural disasters and to drafting legislation and regulations to improve disaster prevention.

At the regional level, several initiatives in the form of conferences or information seminars have given rise to fruitful exchanges of experience. Commendably successful coordinated action, supported by the international community at the time of the 1992-1993 drought in southern Africa helped save millions from death by a famine that had been forecast.

At the international level, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held last May in Yokohama, Japan, brought together delegations from 150 countries and the representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Conference made it possible to assess the international community's awareness of the threat posed by natural disasters and the world community's will to take joint action.

Natural disasters are not confined to any one region. They strike rich and poor countries alike. But the poor countries suffer the gravest consequences, with the destruction of basic infrastructure, industrial facilities, human settlements and agricultural produce. Owing to their low level of development, they are obviously more vulnerable to the consequences of natural disasters than industrialized countries are.

Yet the knowledge and technical means for early warning and prevention are sufficiently available throughout the world to prevent natural disasters from becoming even worse tragedies. This knowledge could be disseminated, as proposed in the Yokohama Strategy, by pooling technologies for disaster prevention and mitigation and making them available to developing countries on favourable terms, and in a timely manner, in the context of technical cooperation.

In this spirit, while it stressed the primary responsibility of States for protecting their populations, their infrastructures and other national assets, the Yokohama Conference also called on the international community to demonstrate the political will to mobilize sufficient resources to support the developing countries in their efforts to combat natural disasters. The least-developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked countries were identified as the most vulnerable.

The disaster-prevention arrangements established in connection with the Decade and refined at the Yokohama Conference have great merit. The adoption of integrated prevention policies and the improvement of regional and international coordination and cooperation between vulnerable countries in the face of disasters could help reduce the losses caused by these natural events. But these arrangements can be effective only if appropriate funds are provided. To that end, it is important to guarantee the resources necessary to finance activities in the framework of the Decade and to ensure continuity in the functioning of its secretariat. Donor countries, international organizations and all other public and private institutions are asked not to ignore the appeal reiterated at Yokohama for voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Decade.

If there is one respect in which rich and poor are equal, it is in their inability to put a final stop to the destructive forces of nature. But that is not true of preventing and mitigating the consequences of those forces. The challenge for the future is to succeed in achieving equality in that sphere as well. That is what we believe the message of the Yokohama Conference to mean, and what we hope to see translated into concrete cooperation and solidarity.

The President: I call next on the representative of Germany, who will introduce the draft resolution A/49/L.29 on behalf of the European Union, Austria, Finland and Sweden.

Mr. Henze (Germany): In speaking on behalf of the European Union, I wish first to address agenda item 37, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance". We want to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, for his comprehensive and informative introduction of the very pertinent questions we are discussing today. Since the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the provision of humanitarian assistance has increasingly gained momentum as one of the most important tasks of the United Nations system.

In view of the constantly rising number and magnitude of natural disasters and complex emergencies, the task of the Under-Secretary-General, as Emergency Relief Coordinator, to effectively coordinate relief efforts is demanding and often challenging. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Hansen for his dedication and unrelenting efforts. The work output of his staff, both at Headquarters and in the field, merits our appreciation. We would particularly like to commend the work of the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Operation office in Rwanda and the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit office in Angola. We believe these are good models of what the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was designed to achieve.

The European Union fully supports the efforts of the United Nations system to introduce a comprehensive approach, which should reflect the relationship and complementarity of humanitarian activities with, on the one hand, long-term preventive, rehabilitation and development measures, and, on the other hand, with United Nations peacemaking and peace-keeping activities. We appreciate the efforts made to improve the Department's world-wide performance. With the urgent needs of disaster victims uppermost in our minds, it has to be said, however, that much remains to be done.

The European Union's main concern is, as has been said before, the effectiveness of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs with regard to the multitude of tasks for which it is responsible. We support the efforts to streamline existing mechanisms and to improve vertical and horizontal coordination. We hope that good results and effective handling will bear out the decisions taken at this point.

We note with satisfaction that Governments in donor and recipient countries have over the years increased their support for the work undertaken by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. It is important that United Nations agencies and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations recognize that the Department's role is to facilitate their own efforts, and that they offer their full support. The European Union trusts that the further development of an integrated approach could greatly enhance the Department's overall performance in terms of coherence and efficiency. We therefore support the Emergency Relief Coordinator in his commitment to a more proactive role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs at Headquarters level through regular and intensive consultations with the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and a structured dialogue with Governments.

At field level, the introduction of humanitarian assistance coordinators for complex emergencies into the already well-established and functional network of Resident Coordinators can provide leadership for humanitarian coordination. We trust that, through complementarity and the selection of suitable personnel, confusion and duplication of work in the critical phases of complex emergencies can be overcome so that maximum coordination efficiency, for the benefit of the needy, can be attained. The European Union would like, at this point, to invite United Nations agencies to be prepared, in cases of urgency, to continue to second the Department personnel suitable for this task.

Another issue on which the success of the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs largely depends are resources. As reported to the Economic and Social Council, it has been estimated that the share of resources provided for humanitarian emergencies in overall United Nations assistance jumped from 25 per cent in 1988 to 45 per cent in 1992, and the same trend applies also to bilateral assistance. As a response to humanitarian challenges, for example, the European Union has shouldered the lion's share of the world's aid contributions. In 1993, through both Community funds and the contributions of member States, 1 billion ECU — approximately $1.7 billion — in funding for humanitarian relief has been provided.

In view of the increase and expansion of humanitarian crises worldwide, however, humanitarian actors at both the national and the international levels are looking for additional funding. The European Union welcomes all initiatives to broaden the donor base and to contribute to international burden-sharing. We therefore encourage the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to pursue its efforts to mobilize resources for humanitarian activities. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund is valuable as a revolving cash-flow instrument and as a tool for speeding up activities and bridging temporary gaps, but it needs to be replenished promptly to be able to function effectively.

Allow me, at this point, to reiterate the appeal to the Secretary-General included in General Assembly resolution 48/57 to render the fullest possible support to the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for the successful execution of their work, *inter alia* through the provision of adequate staff and administrative resources from the United Nations regular budget. With more than 45 per cent of the administrative costs incurred by the Department currently funded from extrabudgetary resources, the need for urgent measures to improve this particular feature is evident. However, it is also essential that the Department's work be clearly prioritized so that resources are allocated where they are most needed.

With an increasing number of complex emergencies, the Emergency Relief Coordinator is called upon as a humanitarian advocate to address such problems as de-mining, demobilization and internally displaced persons. The European Union stresses the importance of ensuring that the humanitarian dimensions, particularly the principles of the humanity, neutrality and impartiality of relief assistance, are taken fully into account in the overall United Nations planning of response to emergencies.

In order to overcome the problems underlying most man-made disasters, however, political solutions are called for. We thus urge all those authorized to do so to do their utmost to facilitate for their countries the return to normal life and development. Within the framework of complex emergencies, humanitarian action has to be undertaken in increasingly dangerous environments. The European Union supports fully the measures taken by the

United Nations as a whole with the aim of securing the safety of humanitarian personnel and welcomes the draft convention on the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel currently under consideration in the Sixth Committee.

The European Union notes with concern the substantial number of draft resolutions containing appeals of countries or regions for special economic assistance. While recognizing the existing needs, we fully support the comprehensive approach taken by the United Nations system in providing for immediate relief measures and an effective continuum from humanitarian aid to rehabilitation and long-term development. We therefore urge Member States to subscribe to the efforts undertaken with a view to streamlining the relevant decision-making processes of the General Assembly, which should lead, in a step-by-step approach, from biennalization and clustering towards an eventual omnibus resolution.

The European Union has taken note of the report of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which was held this past May in Yokohama, Japan. The Conference highlighted the effectiveness of prevention, mitigation and preparedness *vis-à-vis* the impact of natural disasters and the commitment of Governments to the goals of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, as a result, comprises an unbiased status report on the achievements of the International Decade during its first half as well as a realistic and implementable plan of action for the years to come.

What was generally agreed upon, in the course of the Yokohama Conference, as the most urgent requirements for the immediate future therefore enjoys the full support of the European Union. Member States actively participated in the Yokohama consultations and in the mid-term review subsequently carried out by the Economic and Social Council.

We share the opinion that awareness of the potential of disaster reduction must be promoted in all sectors of society, in particular among policy-makers and the general public, *inter alia* through a more active involvement of the media. In view of the interdependence between sustainable development and vulnerability, a strengthening of the resilience and self-confidence of local communities to cope with natural disasters is necessary beyond a more general acknowledgement of responsibilities and potentials at the national level. Furthermore, regional and international cooperation must be based on coherent and realistic national planning by disaster-prone countries, and disaster prevention must be integrated as a matter of course into overall national and international development planning.

The European Union has taken a great and active interest in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction process since its inception in 1989. We therefore pledge our continuous support for the relevant bodies within the United Nations system, and urge the Department of Humanitarian Affairs further to increase its coordination and implementation efforts, especially with a view to strengthening national and local capacities for disaster reduction, early warning and disaster management and to improving interagency coordination and cooperation. In this context, the consolidation of existing mechanisms within the Department's newly formed Disaster Reduction Division seems to be a step in the right direction.

Given the limited financial and material resources, cost- effective pre-disaster care, as stipulated in the framework of the International Decade, appears to be the sensible way to go. The European Union trusts that during the second half of the Decade, and before this millennium comes to its close, disaster prevention will find its rightful place in the development cycle. It must become an integral part of all activities at the international, national and regional levels so that an effective global culture of prevention may eventually take shape.

As we have heard, the number of natural disasters and complex emergencies has been constantly rising in recent years, thus placing an ever heavier burden on the Emergency Relief Coordinator and his staff. The European Union believes that this burden has to be shared, to the extent possible, by the international community, and at this point it would like to pledge its continuous support.

I should now like briefly to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.29 on environmental early warning.

The annual damage caused by environmental disasters is estimated to reach approximately $100 billion by the year 2000. As a consequence, there is a widespread conviction that mechanisms to prevent and reduce the extent of the damage to the environment by man-made and natural disasters have to be substantially improved. The present draft resolution, which is submitted on behalf of the European Union, Austria,

Sweden, Norway, Finland and the United States of America, is designed to launch this process.

At the present stage, it is necessary above all to take a critical look at the existing systems within the United Nations. We must further increase the international community's awareness in order to improve the prevention and mitigation of, and preparedness for, natural and man-made disasters. Therefore, the present draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on existing early-warning systems and to make suggestions on how to improve and better coordinate them. In our view, the existing structures in the field of early warning — for example, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and the World Health Organization — and the coordinating structures, the most important of which is situated in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, should be better integrated in order to improve their performance and to provide for an adequate response to recurring disasters.

We hope that our initiative, which was welcomed by a number of Member States in its preparatory stage, will find the support of the General Assembly.

Mr. Abuoaf (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset I should like to express the thanks and gratitude of the Government of the Sudan to the United Nations for the significant humanitarian work it undertook and continues to undertake, in the area of relief operations in the Sudan. We should like also to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/49/376) of 12 September 1994.

I should like also to extend my thanks to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and especially to Mr. Peter Hansen, the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his statement and his briefing, on the role of his Department in coordinating relief operations in the Sudan.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation go also to all the staff leading Operation Lifeline Sudan, who have devoted themselves under difficult climatic conditions to the provision of relief to the needy in the remote areas of southern Sudan.

We in the Sudan need not reiterate the guiding principles we follow regarding relief and humanitarian assistance. Our thinking stems from our faith and our traditions. We regard relief to the needy as a religious duty and a moral obligation as well as a duty toward every citizen. That understanding is duly reflected in the policies and legislation of our country that regulate humanitarian assistance.

Proceeding from our conviction that humanitarian assistance takes precedence over all political and military considerations, we have welcomed cooperation with the United Nations system and the international community at large. It was through this that Operation Lifeline Sudan, took shape and emerged as a unique Sudanese example that reflects the advanced Sudanese understanding of the process of humanitarian assistance. Operation Lifeline Sudan is a world precedent of a responsible State's proposing the delivery of relief through neighbouring territories and countries to its own citizens, even to those who have taken up arms and risen in rebellion against its authority. It was thus that Operation Lifeline Sudan became an example to be followed, in complex emergency situations, in saving human lives in many parts of the world.

My Government have not stopped at providing the mechanisms needed for Operation Lifeline Sudan, but have continued to honour the commitment to cooperate with the international community in providing relief to all citizens, both in Government-controlled areas and in rebel territories. Since the first phase of Operation Lifeline Sudan the Sudan has extended a hand of cooperation to the United Nations and the donor community in the following ways.

First, we have provided quantities of subsidized grain for purchase by the international community. As you know, the Government has delivered 81,000 tons of sorghum to the World Food Programme this year for distribution to citizens of the Sudan irrespective of their place of residence.

Second, it allocated six steamers and 20 barges from its national fleet to transport relief supplies to the needy.

Third, the Government transferred 90 trucks to the relief organizations for the transportation of humanitarian aid. This is in addition to the allocation of two trains for the some purpose. The Government also proposed that the United Nations operate a train, once a month, to transport relief supplies between Babanusa in the north and Waw in the South — the Government having decided to dispatch a train, once a month, to carry humanitarian aid from Babanusa to Waw — for the purpose of providing people with additional supplies.

Fourth, the Government has created an administrative and technical department to administer and supervise the relief operations.

We have closely studied the Secretariat's report on this subject. While we commend and appreciate the positive comments that highlight the continuing improvement in the functioning of Operation Lifeline Sudan, we note with regret however, that the report contains some points that make us uncomfortable. Let me state the reasons for our discomfort.

First, the statistics of the latest population census in the Sudan, in which the United Nations participated with technical and financial assistance, show that the population in southern Sudan do not exceed 3 million. The report of the Secretary-General is inaccurate in stating that 5.2 million people are affected by the conflict in southern Sudan and that the number of displaced person around Khartoum has reached 1.9 million. Regrettably, in the latter case there is an error factor of more than 100 per cent, as, according to confirmed statistics, the actual number does not exceed 0.7 million.

Second, the report was drafted in a manner that prejudges and calumniates the Government of the Sudan. It accuses the Government of delaying the delivery of its pledged share to the affected people of southern Sudan, instead of commending the Government for pledging unprecedented assistance. We are convinced that in the record of humanitarian work there is nothing to indicate that a State benefiting from United Nations relief donates relief supplies and delivers such supplies to the United Nations for distribution among affected citizens in a non-discriminatory fashion.

Third, the report, in a clear act of injustice and premeditation, accuses the Government of consistently coercing its citizens into moving from their squatter settlements around the cities without providing them with suitable alternative housing. The truth remains that the Government is in the process of implementing a policy aimed at improving the living conditions in these unauthorized squatter settlements through a town planning programme.

To that end, the Government sought the expertise of a European planner with a view to providing these people with suitable housing of a standard that preserves human dignity and equipped with the essential services, which were lacking in the unauthorized random settlements — all in conformity with international standards and the recommendations of the 1992 World Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro.

It seems that the person who drafted the report was either confused or ignorant of the facts relating to the Sudan. It is clear that there is confusion between the unauthorized settlements that are scattered around the cities, on one hand, and the camps that house displaced persons — those who fled form the areas of armed conflict in southern Sudan — on the other hand.

The fact is that unauthorized squatter settlements in the Sudan date back to 1927 and that they remain despite the efforts of the then British colonial Power to replan them in accordance with modern standards. These settlements expanded recently, with enormously adverse consequences. They had to be brought under town planning control to ensure that they measured up to dignified standards of living.

Town planning programmes were subjected to thorough social and technical studies, which laid the basis for compensation for citizens whose homes were affected by rezoning. At the same time, a programme was set up to ensure that every affected citizen had sufficient time to move to the new site allocated to him. The only people who did not benefit from the new plan were the real estate agents and land speculators.

Citizens displaced from southern Sudan because of the war are accommodated in separate camps for displaced persons. As citizens of the Sudan, they are supplied with all essential services, and the international community, through the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations, provides them with humanitarian assistance.

A related allegation in the report is the unfounded, cynical accusation that the Government obstructed the flow of relief to displaced persons. Records of Operation Lifeline Sudan expose this as a lie by referring to the fact that there are 10 international non-governmental organizations operating in the Khartoum camps for displaced persons. These are the American organizations ADRA and CARE, the Netherlands and French Medicains Sans Frontiers, SCF, ACCORD and Goal, the British organization Islamic Aid, Muaffic Voluntary Aid, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Sudanese non-governmental organizations. The American organization ADRA is charged with the task of coordinating relief in the province of Khartoum. This province's relief committee, whose membership includes

several non-governmental organizations, has distributed 37,294 tons of relief supplies of food last year, and a similar quantity is expected to be distributed this year.

Displaced persons are also citizens. As such, they are entitled to live in any part of the Sudan. The Government will neither coerce them into living where they do not want to live nor make them return to the villages of their origin. Furthermore, the Government will not obstruct their voluntary return to their home villages. We welcome any international contribution towards the resettlement of these people.

Fourth, the report is unjust in its appraisal of the tremendous efforts undertaken by the United Nations system and the facilities provided by the Government of Sudan, as well as the much-commended contribution by the international community.

The report completely ignores the continuing and tireless efforts made by the Sudanese non-governmental organizations in the field of humanitarian work despite their meagre resources. The report also fails to make any mention whatsoever of the improvements achieved in the nutrition programme in the conflict-affected areas, which resulted in the dismantling of all the nutrition centres, with the exception of two. The largest city in southern Sudan, Juba, today has sufficient food supplies for the next five months.

Furthermore, the report mentioned only in passing the successful programme implemented by the UNICEF Household Security Programme for food security for conflict-affected families. That programme enabled affected families to produce 17 per cent of their food with an average cost of less than $1 per individual. Moreover, the report does not express any appreciation for the tremendous increase in the number of humanitarian assistance corridors, with an increase of 62 per cent in 1994, when the number reached 112 corridors, compared with merely 70 corridors in 1993 and only 21 in 1992.

The World Food Programme, on the other hand, did succeed in sending 26 convoys by barge transporting relief supplies to the southern states, despite the regrettable incidence of banditry by the rebels, who looted the barges and trains carrying relief supplies to the region.

Fifth, the report does mention incidents of looting and assault on relief convoys in rather generalized and inaccurate language, without openly naming the real perpetrators of such incidents. It became clear that the intention was to level fabricated allegations and imply involvement by the Government in such incidents. Honesty and accuracy would prompt us to say that the real perpetrators of the looting of relief convoys should be named, and we presume that the drafter of the report knows who the perpetrators are. It is quite sufficient here to note that the statement issued by the Secretary-General in May 1994 contained his official condemnation of the outlaws and his condemnation of them for perpetrating the looting of and acts of aggression against the relief convoys. The record of the rebels bears witness to their aggression against the train carrying relief supplies, when they looted more than 880 tons, in addition to looting 1,350 tons of relief supplies from the barges in 1994. Instead of exposing and condemning such incidents of gross criminality, the report was drawn in a manner that insinuates Government involvement in such acts.

Fortunately, this year's rainfall did cover all parts of Sudan, thus promising an agricultural season of abundant harvests. Accordingly, many regions that receive relief may turn out not to be in need of such relief. If this happens, the aggregate relief needed will turn out to be very limited indeed. Having said this, we must point out that we have to wait for the joint report by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme and the Government of Sudan which will make it possible to estimate the expected volume of food production for this season and the quantity of required relief.

On the basis of these estimates, the Government will be able to determine the quantity of cereals it will have to pledge for relief purposes while undertaking to facilitate purchases by the donors from the domestic market for the same purpose.

Therefore, it would be more appropriate for all of us to take advantage of the excellent conditions of this agricultural rainy season this year, to initiate the implementation of the reconstruction projects in the areas affected by the drought or by lack of security in the southern parts of the country, especially after the influx of returnees in the framework of the Government's programme of achieving peace within the country and the implementation of the federal system. Assistance by the international community in this respect is needed to help the returnees resume their normal lives.

Such assistance should focus on food security programmes, including the provision of seeds, agricultural tools and farm machinery, increasing storage capacity and improving the infrastructure for domestic

communities, particularly with regard to local roads, water supplies, sanitation, health services and education.

As we look forward to next year's activities, there should be a great deal of concerted efforts by the Government, the United Nations system, the donors and the non-governmental organizations, since all of them are in pursuit of the same noble humanitarian objectives. We should learn from the experience of the past few years, both the positive and the negative, if we are to improve our performance. That goal cannot be achieved except by ensuring the following conditions:

First, the reaffirmation of our genuine will to conduct humanitarian assistance operations in a purely humanitarian context, without any deviation to serve political interests. Such a condition implies that partners in Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), especially some non-governmental organizations, must strictly ensure that their activities are confined to purely humanitarian objectives and refrain from any anti-Sudanese political and media campaigns. We have witnessed such deviations in the reporting by certain mass media and world news agencies. This we consider to be gross interference in the internal affairs of Sudan, which we unequivocally reject in accordance with all conventions and international norms.

Second, we hope for justice in relief distribution according to need and in a non-discriminatory manner. Accordingly, the donors are requested not to earmark their assistance to a certain geographical area. They are urged to direct their assistance and donations to OLS to be distributed according to need, in order to avoid creating surplus in certain areas while other areas suffer severe shortage, as was the case last year. Recent years have witnessed such imbalance whereby the Government, despite having recaptured vast areas of territory, nevertheless saw the share of relief to the citizens in the areas under its control continue to decrease. It was 73% in 1990, 77% in 1991 then went down to 53% in 1992/1993 and 47% in 1993/1994 despite the inclusion of newly-recaptured areas.

Third, the main assurance of success for humanitarian assistance operations is the arrival on time of the material and financial contributions, thus facilitating early sound planning and setting of accurate timetables for the flow of relief to those who need it most in a timely fashion. The arrival of relief mainly in March instead of the beginning of the year adversely affects the delivery of relief due to the short time left for road transport before the beginning of the rainy season, which compels us to resort to costly air transport to certain areas.

Fourth, optimum utilization of road, river and rail transport from the north to most areas in the south should be ensured in order to reduce the cost of transport and to ensure the sufficient flow of relief, especially in light of the intransigence of the rebels in refusing to allow passage of relief on the roads from neighbouring countries and the increasing risk of using those roads.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Sudan wishes to reiterate once again the full commitment of the people and Government of the Sudan to the cause of assisting our citizens, wherever they are, whether in Government-controlled areas or in areas still controlled by the rebels. My Government expresses in this Hall its appreciation for the whole international community, represented by the United Nations, the donor community and the non-governmental organizations, for the valuable assistance they have provided, and continue to provide, to the Sudanese citizens in need of relief in their regions. My Government also calls for further cooperation towards realizing these noble humanitarian goals. We shall continue to deal with the humanitarian issue with an open heart and mind and in full cooperation with the international community in order to overcome these exceptional emergency situations.

In this context, the delegation of Sudan expresses its full confidence that the General Assembly will unanimously adopt the draft resolutions before it in this context.

Mr. Kurien (India): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report to the General Assembly on the question of strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance. We have studied the report with great care, and welcome this opportunity to participate in the debate on this important agenda item. My delegation associates itself with the views expressed by Algeria, as Chairman of the Group of 77 and on behalf of China, and wishes to make a few additional comments.

The Charter of the United Nations states that one of the purposes of the Organization is to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. India, as a founding member of the United Nations, has consistently attached a high priority to all these aspects of the work of the Organization.

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has come a long way since its establishment pursuant to resolution 46/182. Along the way, it has been further strengthened by other resolutions, such as 47/168, 48/57 and 48/162, and has successfully hurdled several challenges. Primarily set up for effective coordination and strengthening of the humanitarian emergency assistance programme of the United Nations, it has played an admirable role by responding to appeals from various quarters, despite glaring constraints on resources.

The Department has indeed branched out much further, beyond the guidelines laid down in resolution 46/182. There is a need for coordination with the various agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, other governmental and non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The responsibility in the field for humanitarian work has been clearly entrusted by General Assembly resolution 46/182 to the UNDP resident coordinator.

My delegation recognizes the overriding importance of such coordination and has articulated, at various United Nations forums, the need for such coordination to be within the mandates provided by the relevant General Assembly resolutions. While appreciating the tremendous work being done by the Department under the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Hansen, we are committed to ensuring that the initiatives taken by the Department are in accordance with the mandates established by the General Assembly.

The guiding principle of the activities of the Department, as we see it, should be General Assembly resolution 46/182, which clearly spells out the parameters for humanitarian assistance. These include the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality; full respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States; the primary importance of the principle of consent of affected countries and of their appeal; and finally, the primary role that has to be given to the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. My delegation reaffirms its committed support for all humanitarian activities under the United Nations umbrella within these specified parameters.

The report under discussion today has ventured well beyond earlier such efforts, as it seeks to address a range of complex and humanitarian emergencies; the issue of vertical coordination between the humanitarian, peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts; the enhancing of a quick-response capacity in the early stages of an emergency; and measures relating to early warning, vulnerability mapping and preventive action. This is a very wide mandate indeed, and it appears to go well beyond clearly mandated lines, as enabling resolutions authorizing such activity have all been conditional on obtaining more information before final mandates are given.

The report's emphasis that within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee a principal objective has been to develop modalities for interaction between the political, peace-keeping and humanitarian components of the United Nations operations, while establishing procedures governing cooperation, information, joint planning and logistics, is fundamental. Very simply, it links logistical questions to fundamental concepts of primary importance, such as neutrality, impartiality, sovereignty and consent of the nations, which are fundamental to Member States. The report mentions that the Standing Committee has drawn up a set of general principles to guide humanitarian actions in conflict situations, and perhaps these are already being operationalized and acted upon.

My delegation is of the view that such fundamental guidelines need to benefit from wider and more sustained intergovernmental discussions. A framework has to be in place under which regular consultations could be held with Member States before actions as yet falling outside the mandates of General Assembly resolutions gain ground and acceptance through practice.

The addendum to the report, containing the guidelines agreed to by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, has just been circulated, leaving delegations with no time to conduct an in-depth study of the issues raised. The report addresses issues of a fundamental nature that we need time to consider. My delegation is therefore not in a position to endorse the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General at the present moment.

In generally assessing the efforts of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, we firmly believe that clear distinctions have to be drawn to define the relationship between the imperative of peace-keeping and peacemaking and the principles of humanitarian access, which are primarily neutrality and impartiality. The

distinction may be a fine one, easily overlooked in practice in the wake of great humanitarian emergencies. The distinction is nevertheless a relevant, valid and crucial one to Member States, and this needs to be respected.

My delegation is deeply appreciative of the efforts in the United Nations, underlined in the report, on measures for improving prevention of, and preparedness capacities for, natural disasters. The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in Japan, gave us another opportunity to address this important issue. We are particularly appreciative of the efforts for enhanced United Nations activity in increasing country-level capabilities to deal better with natural disasters and sudden-onset emergencies. We would further urge that the technical assistance that has been committed at appropriate levels in the United Nations system to assist countries in these fields be extended without any delay.

My delegation is acutely aware of the financial resource constraints being faced by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. We would like to stress the point that resources for humanitarian emergencies will need to be provided on a regular and predictable basis to support the Department's efforts at making humanitarian assistance possible within the mandates of the United Nations system. While this is being discussed in the open-ended consultations on financing for operational activities, chaired by India, the requirements for humanitarian emergencies would need to be placed on a special footing to assist the most-affected developing countries.

Strengthening national capabilities can go a long way in dealing with humanitarian emergencies. My delegation is committed to cooperating in any new initiatives for strengthening national capabilities in the areas of disaster management and humanitarian coordination which are intergovernmentally discussed, negotiated and accepted. In all these efforts, we will continue to emphasize the importance of clarifying the relationship between conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance. We would be failing in our duty as a Member State if we did not draw attention to the problems that have arisen whenever this distinction has been overlooked.

In conclusion, we affirm our commitment to all United Nations activity in the area of humanitarian assistance mandated in General Assembly resolutions, while also reaffirming the principles of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States and the importance of providing humanitarian assistance with the consent of the affected country.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/6 of 16 October 1990, I now call on the Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Sommaruga (International Committee of the Red Cross) (*interpretation from French*): I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on agenda item 37 during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The year 1994 will be remembered as one of unspeakable suffering, a year in which entire populations were threatened, starved, terrorized, massacred and forced into the insanity of exile. It will also be remembered for having revealed that in large measure the responsibility for this widespread suffering must be borne by the massive trade in conventional weapons of all kinds and their indiscriminate and unprincipled use.

While Rwanda offers the most striking illustration of this situation, other conflicts, such as those in Liberia, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, to mention but a few, must not be forgotten. Today, more than ever before, the International Committee of the Red Cross is involved in all aspects of emergency humanitarian protection and assistance. I am therefore pleased to share with the Assembly some thoughts based on the daily experience of our delegates.

What can be said today about the process of strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance? First, it certainly remains indispensable, especially because of the very magnitude of the task and the growing number of actors on the humanitarian-assistance scene.

Undeniably, progress has been made in terms of openness and exchange of information.

Fortunately, emergency situations often trigger common-sense reflexes that naturally lead, especially in the field, to tangible and complementary efforts to avoid wasting energy. However, it must be noted that much remains to be done before true coordination can be said to have taken the place of cohabitation. This will be a lengthy process if centralization and bureaucracy are to be avoided. Simply adopting resolutions will not solve the problems.

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance should, above all, make possible more efficient planning of humanitarian action in terms of time and of

place. As examples of poor coordination and unsatisfactory planning, we have humanitarian agencies concentrated in a few theatres of operation while others are neglected, and then their simultaneous withdrawal without any provisions for the orderly transition to development programmes. Forgetting or forsaking victims is utterly unacceptable.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which works in constantly evolving conflict situations, is open to the idea of coordination but is intent on protecting its independence. It is open in the sense of transparency and tangible, flexible cooperation, adapted every day to conditions in the field; it is independent in taking decisions, including financial decisions, in order to preserve at all cost its treaty-based role as a neutral humanitarian intermediary, while also preserving the swiftness and effectiveness of its operational activities. This independence is an essential tool in the work done to help all victims, in a spirit of complementarity and solidarity with our humanitarian partners.

Today's debate, which focuses on our humanitarian responsibilities, gives me an opportunity to express to the Assembly my concern about the frequent use of the label "humanitarian" in a sense stripped of its deepest meaning, which has to do with the prevention and alleviation of human suffering.

The pressure exerted on Governments by the media has created a political need for high-profile action, which can in turn obscure overall needs and lead Governments to avoid or postpone necessary political decisions for which humanitarian action is no substitute. This thought prompts me once again to call for a clearer definition of the respective aims and mandates of all the actors on the international scene.

Recent experience, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia, has enabled us to gain a deeper understanding today of the relationship between humanitarian action and military action. While military or police intervention may prove necessary for the deployment of humanitarian operations, the two forms of activity should on no account be confused. Specific aims promote greater efficiency. Indeed, the parties to a conflict must be able to perceive the neutral and impartial character of humanitarian action if it is to be accepted. Wherever this is not the case, victims suffer all the more and humanitarian workers run a high risk of becoming targets of attacks. This is why I firmly advocate a clear distinction between military and humanitarian action, without, however, ruling out the possibility of continuous dialogue to ensure harmonious complementarity.

The setting up of international tribunals to try those accused of massive violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights committed in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda has raised hopes for an end to the reign of impunity. The International Committee of the Red Cross fully supports the establishment of an international criminal tribunal. Justice is a crucial factor in restoring confidence among the people of a divided nation and hence in enabling displaced people and refugees to return to their homes. It is complementary to, yet distinct from, humanitarian action. It is not up to humanitarian agencies to act as judges, and even less as prosecutors, as this would make it impossible for this kind of witness to gain access to the victims.

No crisis can be solved without political action. Without it, emergency humanitarian assistance can do no more than temporarily alleviate the acute symptoms of an endemic, if not incurable, disease.

Is it not obvious that the breakdown of State structures, massive violations of humanitarian law and human rights by Governments or factions, and in some cases the complete disappearance of the very principle of humanity are caused by a lack of attention and action on the part of the international community in finding solutions either before or at the outset of a disaster requiring emergency assistance?

The humanitarian agencies expect political leaders, States, the United Nations and regional organizations to make their task easier, without actually doing the work that has been entrusted to those agencies. Urgent attention needs to be given to situations that are reaching deadlock while continuing to cause dreadful suffering — in Afghanistan, Liberia and Somalia, for example.

I am convinced that all humanitarian agencies wish to join me in inviting political leaders to take greater account of humanitarian criteria when taking decisions to impose economic and financial sanctions. Perhaps we should give special thought here to the grave public-health effects of the paralysis of water-purification and pumping installations. Is it not incongruous to apply the iron fist and then apply the velvet glove of humanitarian aid to restore supplies vital to the population's survival?

In this connection, I should like to emphasize the profound concern of the International Committee of the Red Cross about the disastrous effects that damaging, contaminating or even destroying water-supply systems can have on people, and in particular children. This is an increasingly widespread phenomenon and a growing cause for concern in today's armed conflicts.

The clarification of respective mandates is not the sole guarantee of efficiency. The conduct of different types of activity must also be carefully managed over time. This, I believe, is one of the greatest challenges facing us in a rapidly changing environment.

The sole purpose of emergency humanitarian action is to save lives. Emergency operations should not last longer than is absolutely necessary and should include rehabilitation work.

The continuum of emergency action, rehabilitation and development requires flawless management, all the more because responsibility for such work lies with different organizations with different mandates and different budgets. That is why proper planning over time is so important, both from the conceptual and from the decision-making standpoints, in terms of human, material and financial resources. All these efforts are indispensable for building peace.

As President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, I could hardly conclude this statement before the Assembly without restating the basic postulate that international humanitarian law must be respected in all circumstances. In its Declaration of 1 September 1993, the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims reaffirmed the need to make the implementation of international humanitarian law more effective. An intergovernmental group of experts is at work in Geneva, seeking practical means to promote full respect for this law and the application of its rules. The group will submit a report to States and to the next International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, which will be held in Geneva in December 1995. This Conference is the only forum that provides an opportunity for dialogue between the national Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, their International Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the 185 States parties to the Geneva Conventions. Ensuring that practical steps are taken to fulfil the obligation to respect, and ensure respect for, humanitarian law is an absolute priority and will be the goal of the Geneva Conference. This gathering will leave no room for political debate and will provide an excellent opportunity to find answers to purely humanitarian problems which bring us face to face with our ethical responsibilities. I hope that the debate will be both serene and constructive; indeed, I feel that this is more necessary than ever if the international community is to succeed in taking effective action to relieve the unspeakable suffering being endured by countless persons.

The challenge that lies before us all is to humanize political action rather than to politicize humanitarian action.

Programme of work

The President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to announce that the General Assembly will consider sub-item (c) of agenda item 16, entitled "Election of seventeen members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law", on Monday, 28 November, in the morning. The General Assembly will have to elect by secret ballot two members from among the Eastern European States.

On Wednesday, 7 December, the Assembly will consider agenda item 159, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts by Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", in the morning.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.